

# PART III. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS & APPEALS PACK:

INFORMATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS  
AND PROFESSIONALS IN ENGLAND

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Dear parent,

## A GUIDE TO USING THIS PACK

**This Pack is intended to help you decide how to choose the most appropriate school for you and your children. It provides a range of resources including supporting letters from Tamba to help maximise your chances of obtaining places in the school or schools of your choice. We also want to try and ensure that the school or schools you choose give you a say into how your children are taught and if there is more than one reception class then whether they are taught together or apart. This pack is comprised of three parts:**

- I.** Tamba Handbook: Twins, triplets and more, The Primary School Years.
- II.** Tamba's Survey on the Educational Needs and Experiences of Multiple Birth Children.
- III.** Primary and Secondary Schools Admissions & Appeals Pack: Information Guide for parents and professionals (which includes standard letters, a sample policy for schools and a multiple choice questionnaire to help you decide if you want your children taught in the same or different classes).

## HOW TO USE THIS PACK IN 5 EASY STEPS

- 1) You will benefit from reading all three parts of this pack; however if you are time limited then you may decide that you can only manage Parts I & III.
- 2) Decide if you want your children taught in the same class or if you need a school with separate classes. You can use the questionnaire at the end of Part III to help.
- 3) Choose all your preferred schools for each child and fill in the application form from your Local Authority (LA) stating ALL your preferences for each child. Send the accompanying letters from Tamba (in Part III) to support these applications. [From September 2010, the LA where your children ordinarily live will handle all applications regardless of the area where your preferred schools are located. If you in the armed services or are a Crown servant such as a diplomat, special arrangements may apply – please see later.]
- 4) If you decide to appeal against the school(s) offered then use one of the appeal letters from Tamba (in Part III)
- 5) Before starting school, send copies of the starting school letters from Tamba and sample school policy (both in Part III) to the form teacher (s) and the head teacher(s). Alternatively, you might like to arrange a meeting with the form teacher to talk through some of these issues.

If you encounter any difficulties during this process then please do contact us and one of our voluntary team of honorary consultants will try and help you with the process. We hope you find these resources helpful and please do let us know how you get on and if after going through the process you can think of any other resources that might be helpful then please do let us know.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to Professor Pat Preedy, Diane Galloway, Janet O'Keefe, Gillian Smith, Dr Erika Fraser, Anne Thomas and all the Tamba team for their help in creating this pack.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive

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# SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS

## THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The schools admission process is clearly outlined in the DCSF document "Primary and Secondary School Admissions and Appeals: A Guide for Parents" available from:

DCSF Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park  
Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 6022260 • Fax: 0845 6033360

Please quote the ref. 00160-2008BKT-EN

It can also be downloaded or copies ordered online at:  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

The document is likely to be updated from time to time as changes in legislation occur.

Parents of multiple birth children need to read the guide carefully and also access local arrangements from their Local Authority (or Council). By May 1st each year (p6) 'local authorities must publish information in a local newspaper explaining where you can see the admission arrangements for all schools in that area that are to be used to allocate places for entry in September of the following year.'

At this point, it is important to understand which admissions process you are undertaking. The technical terminology is admission 'in the normal round' or 'in-year'. In brief, the normal round is when places are allocated for first-time entry into the school – this is not to be confused with your children's first entry to that school. For example, first-time entry for infants/primary is Reception Year (YR), for junior school it is Year 3 (Y3) and for secondary is Year 7 (Y7). Middle schools and the like will have their own versions of first-time entry depending on how they are configured. For each normal round applicable to the schools you are considering, you must go through the application process or else it is likely that you will be allocated school places with little or no choice.

In-year (or 'casual') admissions are all other applications for school places. For example, if you move house to another area and need to change school; or if you decide to move your children to a different school even if you do not move residential location. It does not matter if the entry into the school is in the middle of the year or at the start of the academic year in September for a year group other than the first in the school (for example, you've moved house in August and require entry into Year 4 in September – this would still be classed as in-year admission).

If your child(ren) has received a statement of Special Educational Needs which names a school, you have an automatic right to a place in that school so do not need to apply for a place. It is good advice to double-check with your Local Authority school admissions service that they are aware of the child(ren) in your family with a statement.

If your child(ren) has Special Educational Needs but does not have a statement naming a school, you **MUST** still complete an application for a school place.

It is important for parents to recognise that established arrangements in their area may not be those in force at the point their children are due to enter school. Following the Local Authority guidelines is essential, and it is equally important to pay careful attention to which body is the 'Admission Authority' for your preferred schools, as it is not always the Local Authority (it could be the Governing Body of the individual school) and each individual Admission Authority defines its own admissions arrangements..

When completing an application for places in school it is essential to fill in a form for each child. The recommended method for submitting applications is electronically (on line). There should be a space on the form for additional information. Be sure to enter here that the child named on the form is a twin (or higher multiple) and name the multiple sibling(s) in that box. This information cannot then become separated from the application and the children should be considered together.

**N.B. If you hand write your applications and submit them on paper, you will be relying on an office employee to note your comment regarding multiple birth status and enter it on the electronic database. The advice Tamba has received from Local Authorities is to submit applications electronically, so that multiple birth status cannot become lost or to explicitly note on your application that the information is of material interest to the process and should be recorded on your children's electronic records.**

Also, it may sound rather basic advice, but please do pay careful attention to submission deadlines, especially in the normal round. Applications which are submitted late are most often considered after all the on-time applications and can affect your chances of getting places in your preferred school(s).

# A: PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Before completing the application process it is important for some parents to look carefully at the possibility of **deferring** or **delaying** their children's school start. There are certain circumstances in which this might be the right thing to do - for example if the children:

- were born prematurely / with low birth weight
- have significant health problems
- were born late in the school year e.g. July or August (particularly if they were due in September or October – or even later)
- have experienced significant delay in walking, talking, toileting, acquiring fine motor skills etc.
- demonstrate any other signs or behaviours which suggest they are not yet ready for full time education.

If parents are worried about this they should seek advice from nursery staff / G.P. or other professionals about the suitability of deferring or delaying starting school.

Most Local Authority Special Educational Needs teams are very supportive in helping to decide what is in the best interests of your children according to their individual circumstances. (Parents can also contact Tamba to seek support and advice from our Honorary Consultants.)

It should be noted that the following notes are designed to apply to Local Authority maintained schools, and even within this there can be variations such as; Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, which act under the authority of their Governing Bodies, as do Independent Schools operate under their own individual arrangements, even to the point where some of the legislated rules do not apply..

## 1: DELAYING SCHOOL START

This involves delaying start until the year following the chronological year group into which the children would fall by birth e.g. twins born in July 2006, due to start school

in September 2010, but considered too young to cope, could delay start until September 2011. In order to do this, the family would need to contact the LA with evidence supporting their case.

They should request the delay of one year, to be guaranteed throughout the children's schooling (in order to avoid their being forced to 'jump' a year later on.)

If the school prepared to accept a delayed start is a Voluntary Aided or Foundation school, it would still be advisable to gain approval from the Local Authority, as there could be implications regarding funding at a later date, if they move on to a Local Authority secondary school.



Parents should note that delay might affect school choice. Pre-school provision and SATS testing may also be affected and, as things stand at the time of writing, it should be noted that the children would be due to sit GCSE exams after the legal age for leaving school. However, delaying school start remains an option which some parents may find appropriate for their children. If this is so, then they can pursue this knowing that solid and appropriate foundations for learning are essential.

## 2: DEFERRING SCHOOL START

Most LAs provide full-time education for children from September of the school year in which they will turn 5 years old. However, it is still customary in some places for children who were born later in the school year to defer starting school until January or the beginning of the summer term.

Some schools have one intake, some two (either September and January or September and start of summer term), and a very few, three – one each term (although this has mostly been phased out).

The most likely scenario is that of multiple birth children born late in the school year who appear too young in September to cope with the busy full day in the Reception Class.



### PLEASE NOTE

**New legislation in February 2010 is expected to expand parental choice from September 2011, where all children will have the right to start school in the September after their fourth birthday, and parents can decide if they wish their children to start school full or part-time in September, January or April.**

**In addition, if the choice is not to start school then parents will be able to choose free full-time early learning or nursery settings until their children reach compulsory school age of five.**

It is sometimes possible for children to do half-days for a period of time – to be negotiated with staff. Another possibility is to defer start of school until the following term or even, in the case of very immature children, until the start of the summer term.

However, in the case of a deferred school start, it should be remembered that at the end of the Reception year all the children will probably move into Year 1 (although in many schools there is the possibility of staying in a mixed age class of Reception / Year 1 for a further year).

In the event of this happening it should be recognised that the children will have missed much of the Early Years curriculum. Parents can compensate for this, but starting in Reception late in the year shortens children's experience in the special early years environment and exposes them to the more formal requirements of Key Stage 1 with less preparation.

This can be particularly significant where multiple birth children display the common signs of delayed development, bearing in mind that they have had to share resources and attention from conception and are likely to take a little longer than a single birth child to reach the point of 'school readiness.'

If parents choose to defer start until January or the beginning of the summer term they may wish to retain places in Nursery or Pre-school. Parents should be aware that this can prove difficult and that there may be funding implications.

### 3: SEPARATION IN SCHOOL (PROF. PAT PREEDY 2009)

Putting multiple birth children into separate classes at the age of four requires careful consideration and consultation with parents. Most multiple birth children have little experience of separation prior to starting school and may be upset if they have to cope with a dual separation from parents and their co-multiple(s).

#### SHOULD I SPLIT UP MY CHILDREN ACROSS DIFFERENT CLASSES WHEN THEY START SCHOOL? (APPENDIX 15)

**Tamba believes that every multiple relationship is unique and should be treated on a case by case basis. However, on the basis of our recent survey and the latest research from Kings College, which can be read in Tamba's Report on the Educational and Emotional Needs of Multiple Birth Children 2009, we recommend that many multiples appear to benefit from being kept together when they start school. Nevertheless, there are a number of exceptions to this advice and once you have read this section you may like to use the questionnaire at the back of the guide (Appendix 14) to help you make up your mind.**

Many schools have policies (written and unwritten) declaring that multiples should be separated in order to help them to develop as individuals or should be kept together as multiples are a natural unit. Some schools have rigid organisational policies that fail to take into account the needs of multiples e.g. classes are arranged in alphabetical order or birth date so multiples have to be kept together. There is no right or wrong answer with regard to separation in school; each decision should be related to the needs, experience and type of relationship the siblings share.

Before deciding whether to separate multiple birth children, parents and professionals should meet to discuss the pre-school development and experiences of the children. The questionnaire at the back of this guide in appendix 15 and in the Preschool section of the education website ([www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)) provides a useful framework for assessing the children both as individuals and as multiples, prompting discussion about how best to support the learning of the children.

The needs of each child must be considered both as an individual and as a multiple. No decision should be irreversible – flexibility is the key word both for parents and teachers.

### REASONS TO KEEP MULTIPLES TOGETHER IN SCHOOL

- Only one classroom is available.
- Multiple birth children may need the support of each other particularly if they have not experienced separation prior to school or are experiencing a major upheaval such as death, divorce, new sibling etc. Even if the children are comfortable when separated, they may need to be able to check up on what the other is doing
- Very different teaching styles by teachers in the same year group. Even if the teaching styles are similar the children may be compared more at home particularly if one appears to be making more progress e.g. gets a reading book first.
- The multiples do NOT want to be separated. Forced separation in the first year of school along with all the other firsts can actually reinforce dependence on each other. Opportunities to work independently in the same classroom may be a much better option.
- The siblings have shown no problems in previous pre-school settings where they shared a classroom and had a positive and productive school experience with peers.

### REASONS TO SEPARATE MULTIPLES IN SCHOOL

- The multiples want to be separated.
- One child is markedly more able academically and or socially than the other.
- One is a constant distraction to the other.
- One child perceives himself or herself as failing.
- One 'mothers' or over protects the other (more often with boy/girl pairs).
- There is markedly similar progress with one child levelling up or down so that they can keep together.
- There is disruptive behaviour where multiples form a "fatal combination"; the multiples use their identity to cheat or play tricks.
- One or both children are dependent: unable to mix or relate with other children; their constant 'togetherness' is hindering the development of their social skills.
- There is intense competitiveness so that the child's main goal is to keep up with or beat their co-multiple(s).
- One or both children polarise (go to opposite extremes).
- There is lack of privacy where one multiple birth child constantly reports to parents about the activities and progress of the other.
- A division of labour exists that interferes with their learning and socialization.



The placement of multiples should be reviewed annually. Parents and teachers need to discuss how they will support the children before reversing a decision too quickly. The outcome may not be what is expected e.g. when a twin pair is separated because one child is very dominant. In such a case, the dominant child often loses confidence as s/he has lost her main purpose whilst the other child flourishes.

## 4: HOME EDUCATING

Home educating remains an option in England. It should be noted that the DCSF document states: 'All children in England aged 5-16 are entitled to a free place at a state school.'

It is an entitlement which some parents choose not to take up, preferring, for a variety of reasons, to educate their children at home. There are various organisations

which aim to support parents in this.

(See reference section)

It should be noted however, that it is important for multiple birth children to experience friendships outside their multiple birth group (be it twins, triplets or more) in order to develop intellectual and social skills to deal with the world independently. School provides these opportunities naturally. Parents choosing to home educate may need to consciously create such opportunities.

## 5: INDEPENDENT EDUCATION

All Independent Schools set their own curriculum and admissions policies. They are funded by fees paid by parents and the DCSF Admissions and Appeals Codes does not apply to them. However, their arrangements must fall within the law. Where classes are small multiple

### WHAT INPUT WILL I HAVE INTO THE PLACEMENT OF MY CHILD?

**Schools in the UK have a wide variety of practice regarding separation of multiples at primary school, which is reflected in the results of Tamba's recent survey. Almost a third (31.6%) of multiples were in separate classes for the first year of school – this figure is lower if multiples are identical and/or premature. Where there is more than one class in a year-group, most schools (80.5%) gave parents the choice as to whether to keep them together or apart in the first year of school. However, this leaves almost 20% of schools with two or more classes where parents were not allowed a preference: 4.3% of parents said the school insisted on keeping their multiples together and 15.2% insisted on separating them for the first year. You can use the Tamba letters at the back of this guide and the sample school policy if you school are not involving you in this decision making.**

### WHAT RULES ARE THERE?

**There is no legislation governing this matter. Nevertheless, the Government confirmed in a debate in Parliament (Hansard reference: 6 Jan 2010 : Column 140WH) that they expect parents of twins, triplets or more to be consulted on this decision. Schools with blanket policies should now revise them.**

**The Minister for Schools and Learners (Mr. Vernon Coaker) said, "I would like to address**

***the hon. Gentleman's important point about respecting parents' wishes on what class their children should be placed in. Wherever possible, schools should take into account parents' wishes about where children should be placed, and certainly the expectation is that good practice would demand that the school consults the parents on the placement of their children. I do not know whether every parent of every twin would want their children placed in the same class, but certainly the important point the hon. Gentleman made was about consultation with parents, which is absolutely right and would be good practice in most schools."***

**He added, "I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the rights of the parents and the expression of their wishes should be paramount. In the vast majority of cases where schools have consulted with parents who wish their children to be together, they have been placed together, and I am saying that that would be my hope and expectation. The issue for us is that framing that in legislation is difficult. However, reading into the record the fact that that is our expectation and certainly an example of good practice, which one would expect a good school to follow, means that schools will be expected to consult with parents about what they think is appropriate for their children. That would be expected to happen as a matter of course on a range of issues, and clearly it should also happen for an issue as important as which class their sons or daughters are in."**



birth children may comprise a higher proportion of the class which may reduce or restrict friendship choices. This can be significant for multiple birth children, as can gender ratios.

## 6: CHOOSING A SCHOOL / SCHOOLS + ROLE OF THE CHOICE ADVISOR

Placing your children successfully in a Nursery School does not guarantee places in the adjoining Primary or Infants School. Full time education is managed under its own criteria which are different from Nursery arrangements.

Between September and December you should receive information and application packs to help you in your choice of school.

On the application form you will be invited to write the names of three schools in order of choice. It is not advisable to enter only one school, as this can seriously affect the process of your application, if your first and only choice of school is over-subscribed. You could be allocated a school place with little or no choice as to which school it is in..

It is best practice to look first at the schools closest to where you live. Arrange to look round them – preferably on a normal school day – so that you can get a good idea of what it would be like for your children to go there. Bear in mind that distance from a school usually features as one of the admission oversubscription criteria. However, catchment areas and distance from school are not necessarily the same thing. (read page 10 of DCSF booklet: 'Primary and Secondary School Admissions and Appeals 2008)

Many Local Authorities have a Choice Advisor (not necessarily known by this title) who works independently from the Admissions Team. It is well worth your while to seek him/her out and ask for guidance regarding placing Multiple Birth children together. Many advisors give advice for both primary and secondary school settings.

### SHOULD I SEND MY CHILDREN TO THE SAME SCHOOL?

**It is essential under all normal circumstances to place multiple birth children together in the same primary school. In recent years an increasing number of applications have been affected by oversubscription and the Infant Class Size Restriction legislation. Tamba can offer support should you encounter difficulties in this respect. See the enclosed letters aimed to help in the first instance. The Tamba Honorary Education Consultants can offer help and support in the most difficult cases.**

## 7: TYPES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

(see page 4 DCSF booklet: 'Primary and Secondary School Admissions and Appeals 2008)

There are several different types of schools offering Primary education:



- Primary Schools (5-11)
- Infants Schools (5-7)
- Junior Schools (7-11)
- First Schools (5-9 or 5-10)

Sizes vary from small schools (under 50 pupils) with mixed age-group classes, through single form entry (one year to each class: typically 7 classes) to large schools with 2, 3 or even 4 classes to each year group.

For classes with any children in Key Stage 1 (Years R, 1 and 2), infant class size legislation limits the ratio of children to fully qualified teachers to 30:1. Most often this means the class size will not exceed 30. Key Stage 2 (Years 3 – 6) can go over the 30:1 ratio, so it is more common to find class sizes greater than 30. Each school has its Planned Admission Number [or Published Admission Number] (PAN) agreed with the Local Authority. Under certain circumstances it is possible for numbers to go over PAN as long as infant class size limitation is not affected. In a few (very exceptional) circumstances it is possible for a school to admit pupils over the 30:1 ratio limit at Key Stage 1, but this is rare and most often only temporary.

It is worth noting that for entry into the first year group of a school, admission up to the PAN is a legal requirement. Admission over the PAN requires Local Authority permission, and for other year groups the PAN acts only as a guide with admission above or below that number being at the discretion of the Admission Authority.

In choosing the right school for your multiple birth children you may well consider it important for the children to be able to separate into different classes at some point. If this is so, you will need to look at schools with more than one class per year. In these circumstances it could be extremely useful to talk to the Choice Advisor, as your preference may lead you to look at schools further afield than your local schools. It is important for you to make the reasons for your choice clear at an early stage. (see the enclosed letter of support Appendix 5)

If you fail to get places in your chosen school(s), you have a right to have your children placed on a waiting list (how waiting lists are administered does vary however). You may also wish to consider appealing. Go to the Appeal section on page 13 for guidance on this.

### WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF MY CHILDREN GETTING PLACES AT THE SCHOOL OF MY CHOICE?

**Tamba believes that every child should have the opportunity to be with their siblings at the same school. The vast majority of respondents (85.9%) to a recent Tamba survey were offered their first preference primary school for all multiples, although local authorities allocated places in different schools to a small minority of parents (1.1%) or no places at any of the preferred schools (6.9%).**

## B: SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

The process for Secondary School choice and applications differs in some respects from the Primary system.

It is usual for parents to be invited or encouraged to attend open evenings at Secondary Schools, usually in the autumn term before admission, where staff are available for questions, staff and pupils display a range of activities on offer at the school and a senior member of staff (usually the Head Teacher) addresses parents and prospective pupils outlining the strengths and ethos of the school.

Many Secondary Schools have a 'Catchment Pyramid' of Primary Schools in which strong links are forged throughout Key Stage 2 and particularly in Year 6. These are often known as 'feeder' schools..

In rural areas (particularly) transport can be a significant factor when it comes to choice, as it is unlikely that school buses will be run to more than one school, in practical terms, this reduces the element of choice for most families.

The application process is similar to that with Primary applications, however, dates for submission of applications are likely to be different and parents can choose at least three schools – in some areas rising to as many as six. Check submission dates with your LA.

Applications can be made electronically (on line) and advice concerning this is the same as for Primary applications i.e. submit on line and be sure to enter in the 'additional information' box that the children are multiple birth children (naming the multiple birth

siblings) and if you wish them to attend the same Secondary school, that you wish their applications to be considered together.

It is less important for multiple birth children to stay together throughout the Secondary school years than during Primary education. However, many families prefer this arrangement, and some multiple birth children are not ready, at the age of 11, to be split into different schools. In view of the fact that pressure on Secondary school places has become extreme in recent years, it could be that multiples are split. If this goes against your wishes there may be grounds for appeal, (see enclosed letter of support)

The Lottery system (Random Allocation) introduced in many areas has made splitting more likely. The Minister for Children Schools and Families, Ed Balls, has made it clear that he believes this system has not always been used appropriately and that it is "absolutely ridiculous to separate twins into different schools against their families' wishes." (Guardian newspaper).

"I am also asking the Schools Adjudicator to look at the issue of twins. The fact that twins can be split in a lottery-based allocation of school places seems to me to be ridiculous. I am assured that there is nothing in the code that would ever suggest this should be done and I'm asking the Schools Adjudicator to look at how we can make crystal clear in guidance and in the code that splitting up twins when parents don't want them to be split is the wrong thing to do." Ed Balls in DCSF Press notice 2009/0043

## 1: CHOOSING A SECONDARY SCHOOL

### D. GALLOWAY (2008)

#### FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

- Together in the same school or separate schools
- Male / female or mixed
- Mixed ability / streamed / sets for different subjects (N.B. this changes in Year 10 for GCSE)
- Transport arrangements
- Academic reputation
- Extra-curricular activities
- Ethos (attitude, aims, atmosphere)
- Discipline

#### HOW TO FIND OUT

- Talk to parents of current pupils
- Talk to current pupils
- Open days / evenings
- Visits to schools on a normal day
- Prospectus

- League tables (beware – only a 'snap-shot')

#### HOW TO DECIDE

- Decide on your family's priorities from the list of factors
- What would each child like?
- What would you like?
- Consider pros and cons for each school
- Remember you may have to compromise
- Apply to more than one school if the children must stay together
- Do not express strong views about the school you want least (just in case your child/ren have to go there - it is vital for a child's well-being that parents approve of the school)
- Visit the education website: [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)
- Letters of application (see also above)
- Each child needs a separate letter
- For each child, say how the school would benefit that child
- Also say what your child could offer to the school (music, sport etc.)
- Use the multiple relationship as only one reason for wishing that both / all children attend one school.

## 2: DIFFERENCE OF ABILITY

It is normal for multiple birth children to be both competitive and supportive. They will very often progress at different rates and at varying times outstrip each other, both academically and physically. In boy/girl twins it is not unusual for the girl to progress well at school and her brother lag behind. Girls typically do better academically during Key Stage 1, but boys catch up during Key Stage 2. Puberty can once more exaggerate the differences between boys' and girls' emotional maturity and can lead to significant differences at school.

Multiple birth children may also have very different needs and abilities because of health issues or difficulties at birth. Some may have Special Educational Needs.

Where differences are extreme, parents are faced with difficult choices about how to educate their children. There may be a strong desire to keep them together which conflicts with the desire to provide for their very differing needs: should they be separated into different groups / classes / schools? How will they cope when exam results are very different? Should they be kept together in the hope that the gap will close, or should they be freed from constant comparison?

All these are questions, which may well inform choices both at Secondary and Primary School transition (and



even when to enter formal education). It is a good idea to talk through such matters with teachers and other appropriate professionals. Tamba's Honorary Consultants may also be able to help you make your decision – by talking through your concerns with you.

If one of your children has special educational needs, beware of insisting that their twin must go to the same secondary school to look after him. He will need to become independent by the time he leaves school, and your other child will need some time to develop his own friendships and self-worth, apart from being his brother's minder. Going to the same secondary school may well be the best option, as it is with most pairs of twins; but it is important not to over-stress the caring role as the main reason. Your more able child will not want to feel burdened and your child with special needs must see that you have confidence in his ability to cope.

Very often Primary Schools can provide a flexible environment in which differences can be easily accommodated. This may become more difficult at Secondary level and so it may become appropriate to split the children into different schools at this stage. Be sure to include Secondary age children in the decision-making process.

### **3: WAITING TO HEAR ABOUT PLACE ALLOCATION**

For both Primary and Secondary School admissions it is important that parents note the published dates for the

applications and decisions and be prepared 'on the day' to deal with outcomes.

At the Primary level parents' concerns will be focused on how to prepare children for the school they will attend, and they are likely to feel that it is inappropriate to discuss this too much with the children until they are certain of the outcome. Primary School place allocation takes place over a period of time with different Local Authorities announcing allocation at differing times – some as early as March and some as late as the end of May.

At Secondary level children will be much more aware of the process and there may well be anxiety about application outcomes. Secondary School place allocations are made public on the same date: National Offer Day March 1st (or the next working day).

During the waiting time try to keep the topic as low-key as possible, to minimise anxiety. Reassure children that all will be well whatever happens, and that you will support and help them when the time comes. Try not to regard the process as one of 'success or failure' – particularly for Secondary School children. It is important that 11 year olds recognise that if they do not get in to the first choice school, it is the system that has let them down – they have not let themselves or their parents down. This may be their first experience of being at the mercy of a decision-making process outside of their control and they may need to be reminded that your love for them is not conditional on their achievements.

### **4: NATIONAL OFFER DAY / PLACE ALLOCATION DAY**

If you do not receive the place allocation(s) you hoped for, you have a right to have your children placed on a waiting list (how waiting lists are administered does vary however). Also, it is a legal requirement that you are offered the right of appeal. Your approach may not be so much appealing against the decision but for a place or places in your preferred school.

**Read the Appeals section in the DCFS booklet: "Primary and Secondary Admissions and Appeals 2008", beginning at page 14.**

Appeals can be very stressful. It is important that you fully recognise this before embarking on the process. See the Appeals section on page 13.

Initially, particularly with Secondary age children, your main responsibility will be to help them through a difficult day and talk through what you will do next. It is important to reassure them and to make it clear to children that they have not failed you. You may be upset yourself, but try to keep focused and avoid taking things personally.



# C: IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS AND FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOLS

## 1: IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

In-year admissions (also known by other terms such as casual admissions) are where school places are required for any year group and starting at any time within the academic year except where entry is considered part of the normal round (which is entry at the start of the academic year into the first year group of that school).

Most of the admissions rules and regulations still apply equally to in-year admissions. Differences tend to be associated with timescales – submission deadlines for instance, or turnaround times to receiving a decision about your application – and in many cases decisions can be made within a matter of days.

Rights to be placed on a waiting list or to appeal remain.

From September 2010, all in-year applications need to be made to the Local Authority in which your children are normally resident (your 'home' LA). Your LA will then coordinate the processing of your application with all of the schools on your application, even if they are located in a different LA area. Your LA will come back to you with the decision to offer or decline.

If you are in the process of moving house, it can get a little confusing as to which LA is your home LA depending on which stage you are in the moving process. If you are moving into a new LA area, best advice is to contact the school admissions services of both LAs (current home and future home) and ask for an explanation of their procedures. Usually, if you can prove residency through an exchange of contracts or tenancy agreement, the LA of your new area will accept you as residing in their area and that then becomes your home LA to which you make your application.

A situation requiring particular attention is that of UK service personnel or Crown servants (including diplomats) who are posted into an area. Again, best advice is to contact the LA covering the area to which you are being posted – it is a requirement that LAs give special consideration to such families (see 'Fair Access Protocols' below) to ease the transition for the families affected, and it is often the case that proof of posting is sufficient evidence for an LA to offer to support you as the 'home' LA.

Should any part of this process of in-year application prove difficult to understand or indeed troublesome, please seek advice from your LA or contact us.

## 2: FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOLS

It is a legal requirement that all Local Authorities publish a Fair Access Protocol (FAP). The LA's FAP applies to all of the maintained schools in its area. The FAP is applied when children have no school place and where the usual admissions procedures are failing to secure a school place within a reasonable timescale. Instances where the FAP may be appropriate are, for example, that all the schools in an area (a reasonable distance from the children's home) are full, or children exhibit challenging behaviour and have been permanently excluded twice, or children/a family are in circumstances of significant vulnerability.

The School Admissions Code is the best document to refer to if you feel that allocation of a school place under the provisions of a FAP applies to your children. The circumstances described in the Code as a minimum for inclusion in every FAP are:

1. Children attending PRUs who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education;
2. Children who have been out of education for longer than one school term;
3. Children whose parents have been unable to find them a place after moving to the area, because of a shortage of places;
4. Children withdrawn from schools by their family, following fixed term exclusions and unable to find another place;
5. Children of refugees and asylum seekers;
6. Homeless children;
7. Children with unsupportive family backgrounds, where a place has not been sought;
8. Children known to the police or other agencies;
9. Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems;
10. Traveller children;
11. Children who are carers;
12. Children with special educational needs (but without a statement);
13. Children with disabilities or medical conditions;
14. Children returning from the criminal justice system; and
15. Children of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants.

It needs to be stressed that the use of a Fair Access Protocol to allocate school places is to act as a fail-safe for the exceptional circumstances where the minority of children who, for whatever reason, may find it difficult to access a school place.

## SECTION 2: APPEALS

### D: THE APPEAL PROCESS

If you are not happy with your place allocation you are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Lodging an appeal does not affect your chances of being allocated a place from a waiting list. To help prepare your case, you may like to read the section on appeals in the DCSF booklet (2008) p.14

For both Primary and Secondary appeals there are two basic grounds for appeal:

- 1: Maladministration (where the Local Authority has made a mistake in dealing with the application)**
- 2: Unreasonableness, which is where the decision made is one that would be considered unreasonable once all the evidence and information in support of the application is considered. Social and medical grounds may be included which covers all other situations in which a family wishes their exceptional circumstances to be given full consideration and has particular relevance for issues associated with multiple birth families**

Appeals are rife with rules and regulations, all of which are defined in the School Admission Appeals Code (essential reading available on the DCSF website or by contacting us). Most of the rules and regulations apply to the authorities. Whilst intense and complicated, it is a worthwhile process to follow if you feel strongly that you have either not been treated fairly or have not had an opportunity for someone to hear the complexities and challenges of your individual situation and how places at a certain school can help alleviate those challenges.

When embarking upon an appeal, it is best approached with a lawyer-style attitude. Indeed some families do employ lawyers to represent them, especially when trying to prove maladministration. There are plenty of legal groups who will represent your interests at appeal (easily found by searching the internet), but one organisation of repute who will offer a level of advice and support for no cost is ACE. The Advisory Centre for Education is a national charity that provides advice and information to parents and carers on a wide range of school based issues including admissions, exclusion, special education needs, bullying and attendance. [<http://www.ace-ed.org.uk>]

The most important thing to remember is that the people you will be trying to influence are the members of the appeal panel. They are not school or Local Authority staff, and should be well trained and independent. If it is possible to attend the appeal, this will count favourably with an appeal panel (not

attending does not affect your rights, but in practice this is a situation requiring influence and tactics to gain empathy). In most cases, the panel will give you time to get all your points across, and often 'cross-examine' the Admission Authority to ensure you have been treated fairly. Be comprehensive, and ensure that the focus is on meeting the needs of your children and how the school is unique/best placed in being able to meet those needs.

Use the letter(s) in the pack to support your appeal – selecting the appropriate letter for your situation. It is important to recognise that every multiple birth family has unique needs and that what is appropriate educational provision for one family may be wholly inappropriate for another (hence the differing nature of the letters available for you to use). You will also need to fit the basis of your appeal with the offer you have been made and the particulars of the school for which you are appealing for a place/places.

If you are not sure how to use the pack to support your appeal contact Tamba Twinline for help or seek support from one of the Honorary Education Consultants via the Tamba office.

It is important to set out your appeal clearly and to make sure it is a positive appeal for a place/places at the school of your choice, and not an appeal against the school allocated. Collect evidence from professionals who can add perspective to your child/ren's case(s) – teachers / nursery teachers / GP / other professional(s)

If you are appealing for places for more than one child and/or at more than one school, you must submit appeal paperwork for each child and for each school.

As with your original application for places, be sure to declare clearly that each child is a multiple birth child (and name multiple birth siblings), give the date of birth and clearly identify the school at the top of the letter. You may be allocated a case reference number – if so, use this in all correspondence.

### COMMON REASONS FOR MULTIPLE BIRTH APPEALS

Listed below are the most common reasons, multiple birth families lodge an appeal or appeals against the allocation of one or more school places. Over the past ten years, our Honorary Education Consultants have supported families in most of these circumstances.

When you appeal you will be asked to give reasons for your decision often in writing and sometimes in person at an appeal hearing. You may like to use the information outlined below as a basis for your argument, while the information supplied in Tamba's Education Survey provides further evidence to support them.

## **PREMATURE BIRTH: DEFER/DELAY SCHOOL ENTRY**

Multiple birth children tend to be born early and consequently have a low birth weight. Shared resources and difficulties at the time of birth can also affect them adversely.

Language delay and delays in walking, development of gross and fine motor skills and toilet training are all features regularly encountered in multiple birth children. They can also suffer Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder.

Over time they are likely to overcome many of these things, but their early years are vitally important in this process.

Where children have had to deal with a combination of difficulties in their first three years it is important that full time education is considered carefully. It may well be appropriate to defer or delay starting school so that children have the extra time they need to master the full range of preschool skills and experiences.

Nothing can replace the vital years of preschool life, where foundations for learning are put in place. To start school too soon would be to burden the child with a range of expectations beyond their ability to achieve. By deferring or delaying school start the children have the opportunity to 'catch up' and can then progress confidently into their next stage of life.

## **DEFERRING SCHOOL START**

Multiple birth children are often behind other children in terms of development and readiness for fulltime school.

It can be enormously helpful if they are considered for a deferred place: starting school in January or even in the summer term, thus giving them the time they need to catch up with their peers in terms of foundation development. It is important that any deferment is underpinned by appropriate preschool provision. If this is impossible, then part time school attendance may be appropriate, until such time as the children can cope with and benefit from a full day in school.

## **DELAYING RATHER THAN DEFERRING SCHOOL ENTRY**

Delaying school start would mean children commencing

school in the year following their chronological year: for example a child born in August would be expected to start school in the year following their 4th birthday, but could delay until the following September – when they will be just turned 5.

Children born prematurely may well fall into a different school year from that into which they would have been in had they gone to term. This is particularly difficult for multiple birth children who, by reason of their being part of a multiple birth, would in any case be likely to fall behind their peers in their early years.

Children born early and towards the end of the school year ought to be considered for delayed start. This would give them the time they need to grow, develop and mature to the point of readiness for full time education.

Where start is delayed it is essential that this delay is guaranteed throughout the children's education, so that they should not be forced to miss out a school year later on.

Appropriate preschool provision for the extra year should also be guaranteed.

## **THE ADDITIONAL NEEDS OF TWINS AND HIGHER MULTIPLES**

It is frequently said that multiple birth children are no different than siblings born close together. However, there is ample evidence to refute this claim. Multiple birth children have particular and additional needs that must be addressed in the admissions process in order to provide them with an appropriate school setting.

In any application for school places multiple birth children should be regarded as a single application and under no circumstances should their applications become separated.

Multiple birth children should only be allocated places in different schools when the profound needs of one child require a setting which would be inappropriate for the other(s).

It is important that school policy recognises the specific and additional needs of multiple birth children and that schools adopt the kind of flexible policy proposed by Professor Pat Preedy. (see A Policy for Schools)

Each multiple birth family should be considered individually, recognizing its unique circumstances. All policies should attempt to be flexible and to adapt to change.

## A POLICY FOR TWINS

Multiple birth children have additional needs which should be addressed in school policy. Professor Pat Preedy's Policy for Twins is a model available for use by schools. It underlines the unique nature of the twin relationship and the need to look at each set of multiple birth children individually, identifying specific needs and providing for them.

## SCHOOLS WITH AT LEAST 2 PARALLEL CLASSES IN EACH YEAR

In cases where multiple birth children become too 'closely coupled' or 'extreme individuals' (see Pat Preedy's work 2001) it can be advantageous to separate them into different classes at the same school. This gives them the space they need to develop at their own rate, without constant comparison with their multiple sibling(s).

## SEPARATION OF TWINS

The twin relationship is a complex one. Twins understand the world from a twin perspective. Early separation can severely affect their well-being and should only be undertaken in specific circumstances, where the progress of one or both children is being adversely affected by the presence of their twin sibling.

## TOGETHER

Multiple birth children share experiences and resources from conception onwards. Everything in their lives is shared and so a strong bond is forged between them which can be a positive influence in their early years. Transition to full-time education is a big step for any child. For multiple birth children separation from each other can be more traumatic than separation from mother or father, and can have a severely negative effect on their wellbeing.

Research (Tully et al 2004) shows that multiples separated into different schools at YR or Y1 do less well in tests than those kept together at this stage. In order to give most multiple birth children the best start in education it is advisable to keep them together until at least Y2, reviewing the situation as they grow and mature.

No decision regarding separation should be taken without a full discussion between school and parents.

## BOY/GIRL TWIN DOMINANCE

It is common in boy/girl twins for one to dominate the other. Very often, in their early years, the girl will dominate the boy, overwhelming him with attention and allowing him to use her as main friend, interpreter and 'servant'.

Once at school, the negative effects of such an unbalanced relationship can become exaggerated, as the girl settles to school routines and development of

social skills and organisation, so that she has a tendency to progress more quickly than her brother. He can fall behind and cease to try.

In such circumstances a trial separation may be the only answer – beginning by separating the twins into different activity groups. In extreme cases they may need to be in separate classes.

There is a natural imbalance between male and female progress in school, which usually evens out during Key Stage 2. However, in boy/girl twins, the effects of this can be profound as one holds back in order to allow the other to catch up or, conversely, the less successful twin ceases to engage with learning.

A careful watch should be made of such pairings, to ensure that each child is able to work to their full potential.

## BEHAVIOUR

Multiple birth children compete for attention from the cradle onwards. In school this can cause them to be dominant in group discussions and slow to allow other children a chance to speak.

Through force of habit they are likely to relate to multiple birth siblings and measure themselves against that standard, paying less heed to outside influences.

Properly understood, this manifestation of multiple birth rivalry can be channelled positively and children can be encouraged to develop appropriate skills.

It may take time for multiple birth children to overcome deeply embedded behaviours, but careful management and small targets can be effective.

## INDIVIDUALITY

It is important for multiple birth children to develop as individuals and to discover their own strengths and interests. Separation at school does not necessarily foster individuality. In fact, it can have the opposite effect, forcing the children together at playtime and out of school hours and creating a too 'closely coupled' group.

Addressing multiple birth children by name (rather than 'twins' or 'triplets' etc.) talking to parents about one at a time at parents' evenings and encouraging each child as an individual are all strategies that teachers can use successfully in this regard.

Multiple birth children need to forge individual friendships and to work and play outside the 'multiple birth group', but their multiple birth status also needs to be acknowledged and, at times, celebrated, rather than ignored.



## E: WEBSITES

[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

(education support for parents and carers)

[www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)

(for babies born 'too soon, too small, too sick – readiness for school)

[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

(dcsf website)

[www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk)

(Tamba's website)

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

(dcsf publications)

[www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

(education and research website)

[www.wordswell.co.uk](http://www.wordswell.co.uk)

(language delay – readiness for school)

## FURTHER READING

### INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES (DCSF)

- **'Primary and Secondary School Admissions and Appeals: A Guide for Parents'** from the DCSF available by post or download from [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)
- **The Schools Admission Code** (covering both Secondary and Primary Schools available as a download from [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk))
- **The School Appeals Code** – also available as a download from [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk).

### FACTSHEETS AND ARTICLES FROM TAMBA AT [WWW.TAMBA.ORG.UK](http://WWW.TAMBA.ORG.UK)

- **Family Relationships in Families with Multiples'**
- **Dealing with differences in Multiples'**
- **Multiples and Money Matters'**
- **HIGHER MULTIPLES IN SCHOOL AND PRE-SCHOOL:** A survey by Diane Galloway June 2000
- **The Statement of Special Educational Needs + Assessment of a child's educational needs** (J. O'Keefe)
- **Together or apart in the same secondary school?** Diane Galloway (Tamba Honorary Consultant for Secondary Education), First published in *Twins, Triplets and More* magazine, Spring 2004
- **Our School Nightmare** by Gillian Smith (first published in *Twins, Triplets and More* magazine in 2002)
- **'Meeting the educational needs of multiple birth children'** David Hay and Pat Preedy : *Early Human Development* (2006) 82, 397-403
- **'Together or Apart?'** David Hay, *Twins Research* Volume 7 Number 2 pp. iii-iv
- **'When You Are Born Matters: The Impact of Date of Birth on Child Cognitive Outcomes in England'** C. Crawford, L. Dearden, C. Meghir. The Institute of Fiscal Studies, London. (October 2007)
- **'Twins and Multiple Births: the essential parenting guide – from pregnancy to adulthood'** Dr Carol Cooper (see chapter 12 on primary school and chapter on secondary school)

# H: GLOSSARY

**Academies** are all-ability, state-funded schools. They have sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds, including universities, high-performing schools and colleges, the business community, charities and the faith communities. Sponsors appoint the majority of the governing body, which agrees the academy's admissions arrangements with the DCSF

**ADD** Attention Deficit Disorder.

**ADHD** Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder

**Admission authority** The body which decides a school's admission arrangements. This is either the Local Authority or, in Voluntary Aided or Foundation Schools, the school governing body.

**Admission arrangements** The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding allocation of school places.

**Appeal panel** An independent panel which hears appeals against admissions decisions.

**Banding** An admission system in which all children applying for a place at the school are placed in ability bands, based on their performance in tests. The results are used to ensure that the school offers places to children across a wide range of abilities.

**Boarding schools** Schools in which some or all pupils live as well as study during term time.

**Catchment area** A defined geographical area which is used to decide which applications may be given priority to attend a particular school.

**Children in care** Children who are in the care of the Local Authority (sometimes referred to as 'looked after children'.)

**Choice Advice** An independent service which can support families who need help during the Secondary School admissions process. Choice Advisors can help you make your choice, but cannot make decisions for you. (Choice Advisors may also help with Primary School choices.)

**Closely coupled** Multiple birth children who act as though they are a couple or unit and are mostly treated by other people as one unit. (see Pat Preedy's article in appendix 5)

**Community schools** are run by the Local Authority which decides on the admissions arrangements. Community schools look to develop strong links with the local community, sometimes offering use of their facilities and providing services such as childcare and adult learning classes.

**DCSF** Department for Children, Schools and Families

**Deferring school start** Starting school in the school year in which the child is due to start, but not until later in the year: January or at the start of the summer term.

**Delaying school start** Starting school at the beginning of the year after the one in which the child was due to start.

**Dominance** Where one multiple birth child is dominating the other(s) in terms of speech, behaviour and decision-making.

**Extreme individual** Multiple birth children who find their relationship with each other restrictive to such a degree that they may fight, deny their multiple birth relationship sometimes polarizing to opposite extremes in order to establish their own identities (see Pat Preedy's article in appendix 5)

**Faith schools** have a particular religious character. They are mostly run in the same way as other state schools. However, their faith status may affect their curriculum and also their admissions policies.

**Feeder primary schools** These are the schools from which the secondary school normally takes its pupils.

**Foundation schools** are run by the governing body, which sets the admissions arrangements.

**Governing bodies** Every school has a governing body, which often includes parents. Governing bodies promote high standards of educational achievement. They have three key roles: setting strategic direction, monitoring and evaluation and ensuring accountability.

**Grammar or selective schools** Schools which select all or a proportion of their pupils on the basis of academic ability.

**Independent schools** set their own curriculum and admissions policies. They are funded through fees paid by parents and the School Admissions and Appeals Codes do not apply to them.

**Infant class size** Infant classes, where the majority of children are aged five, six and seven, must not exceed 30 children per teacher (except in a small number of circumstances).

**LA Local Authority** (i.e. Council, formally LEA Local Education Council)

**Local Government Ombudsman** An independent and free service which investigates complaints about public processes, including school admission appeal hearings.

**Mature dependent** Multiple birth children who enjoy their relationship with each other functioning effectively both as multiples and as individuals. (see Pat Preedy's article in appendix 5)

**Middle schools** have a different entry point from primary and secondary schools – normally an entry age before or after 11 years of age.

**Voluntary Aided (VA) School:** A School (frequently a Church of England School) where the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority for that school.

**Voluntary Controlled (VC) School:** A school (frequently a Church of England School) where the Local Authority is in charge of admissions.

# I: APPENDICES

## HOW TO USE THESE LETTERS, SAMPLE SCHOOL POLICY & QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please feel free to use the following letters to support your children's educational needs. You will need to add their names, dates of birth, preferred school and your home address to each letter. We also suggest you date each letter you send.

If you are wondering who to send the supporting letter to for your application or are making an appeal then you should confirm this with the local authority. The school application team should be able to help.

You will also need to draft your own supporting

statements which explains your own personal circumstances when asking to delay or defer school entry, request a specific school, appeal against the offer of one or more school places or request for your children to be taught in the same or different classes.

It is helpful if you submit all your supporting documents and letters at the same time. If you have a reference number then please also quote this on all documents. Tamba's letters and the school policy and questionnaire at the end of this document can also be downloaded at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk)

**If there isn't a letter suitable for you requirements – especially for higher multiple families, then we may be able to draft one. Contact the office for more help.**



To the Director of Education

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....

Date of birth: .....

School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Re: Request to delay school entry for a year**

I am writing in support of the above request. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this request. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Independent research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced.

Our own recent research, which can be downloaded at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk), has found that almost half of multiple birth children are born prematurely and around 20% of these end up starting school in the wrong school year. Parents also raised several issues related to prematurity and starting school early which include: speech problems; tiredness; learning and behavioural difficulties; toilet accidents; difficulties getting themselves changed for P.E.; being academically behind their peers; and emotionally and socially immature. For many children, it appears that delaying school entry can help to address these issues and ensure that they have the best start to their school career.

The family themselves will explain how this option best applies to their children and I hope in the light of this information you will allow this family to delay the school entry for their children which will give them the best start in school life.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)



To the Director of Education

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....

Date of birth: .....

School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Re: Request to defer school entry**

I am writing in support of the above request. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this request. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Independent research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced.

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The family themselves will explain how this option best applies to their children and I hope in the light of this information you will allow this family to delay the school entry for their children which will give them the best start in school life.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)

To the Director of Education

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....  
Date of birth: .....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Re: Supporting Multiple Birth Children's School of Choice**

I am writing in support of the above application. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this case. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced. The 'close coupling' of their relationship can further add to difficulties in the children developing their own individuality and these combined factors require very careful consideration when choosing the correct educational setting.

Multiple birth children have additional needs to those of singletons. These must be recognised and provided for appropriately if the children are to fulfill their potential socially, emotionally and intellectually. Ignoring them can lead to complex difficulties, over time.

The specific circumstances of this family are described elsewhere. However, research clearly shows that it is best to keep multiple birth children together in the same school at this critically important time in their lives. Setting aside the not inconsiderable practical considerations concerned with the routines attached to school attendance, it is essential to recognise and address the children's fundamental needs.

I realise that in placing multiple birth children it can be difficult to make a place allocation that will provide for more than one child with such specific needs. However, over the years Tamba has sought to promote best practice in the light of national and international research findings. Each multiple birth family is different and must be dealt with according to individual need. The needs of this family are unusual and specific. All the evidence of recent research would support the route they wish to take.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
keithreed@tamba.org.uk

To the Director of Education

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....  
Date of birth:.....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Re: Supporting request for a two or more form entry school**

I am writing in support of the above application. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this case. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced. The 'close coupling' of their relationship can further add to difficulties in the children developing their own individuality and these combined factors require very careful consideration when choosing the correct educational setting.

The specific circumstances of this family are described elsewhere. However, it is not unusual for a family to seek places in a school where, although together in the same school and able to interact at times during the school day, their children will have the opportunity to go into different classes - rather than attending a small school where such separation would be impossible. Although current thinking would suggest that it is better to keep multiple birth children together during the first two years at school, not every family conforms to this pattern and there are certainly advantages to be gained from having the option to separate into parallel classes higher up the school.

I realise that in placing multiple birth children it can be difficult to make a place allocation that will provide for more than one child with such specific needs. However, over the years Tamba has sought to promote best practice in the light of national and international research findings. Each multiple birth family is different and must be dealt with according to individual need. The needs of this family are unusual and specific. All the evidence of recent research would support the route they wish to take.

Yours faithfully



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
keithreed@tamba.org.uk

To the Chair of the Appeals Panel

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....  
Date of birth: .....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

**Dear Chair**

**Re: Appeal for places in a single school**

I am writing in support of the above appeal. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this case. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced.

The specific circumstances of this family are described elsewhere. However, research clearly shows that it is best to keep multiple birth children together in the same school at this critically important time in their lives. Twins should not be forced into premature separation at such a tender age. They have special bonds which cannot be ignored. Research has clearly shown that the bond between twins can be stronger even than that between parent and child and that understanding this relationship properly is fundamental to deciding the right school path for twins – particularly in relation to separation issues. To make a decision about their schooling based purely on numbers woefully ignores the psychological and social foundations upon which any such decision should be made.

The Government have recognised this and announced that they intend to amend the admissions code at the earliest opportunity to ensure that families are not split up against their will. During the interim, the Minister in a debate in Parliament said, "Before answering that, I will say that he knows-this is why it is sometimes important to read things into the record-that I hope that what he has described will be the case in September 2010, or indeed whenever young children are admitted to primary schools prior to the new regulations coming into force. To be clear, that will not have statutory force until the admissions code is amended. The fact that I have said that on the record means, I hope, that some local authorities, when coming to those decisions having read those remarks, will take the sort of decision that he and I would want." The full debate can be read in Hansard (6 Jan 2010 : Column 138WH).

Setting aside the not inconsiderable practical considerations concerned with the routines attached to school attendance, it is essential to recognise and address the children's fundamental needs. In the light of this, I would strongly urge you to find some mechanism by which these children can attend their chosen school – chosen as it best meets their multiple birth needs and will give them the best start in school life.

Yours faithfully



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
keithreed@tamba.org.uk



To the Chair of the Appeals Panel

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....  
Date of birth: .....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Dear Chair**

**Re: Appeal for places in a school with parallel classes in each year**

I am writing in support of the above appeal. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this case. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced. The 'close coupling' of their relationship can further add to difficulties in the children developing their own individuality and these combined factors require very careful consideration when choosing the correct educational setting.

The specific circumstances of this family are described elsewhere. However, it is not unusual for a family to seek places in a school where, although together in the same school and able to interact at times during the school day, their children will have the opportunity to go into different classes - rather than attending a small school where such separation would be impossible. Although current thinking would suggest that it is better to keep multiple birth children together during the first two years at school, not every family conforms to this pattern and there are certainly advantages to be gained from having the option to separate into parallel classes higher up the school.

I realise that in placing multiple birth children it can be difficult to make a place allocation that will provide for more than one child with such specific needs. However, over the years Tamba has sought to promote best practice in the light of national and international research findings. Each multiple birth family is different and must be dealt with according to individual need. The needs of this family are unusual and specific. All the evidence of recent research would support the route they wish to take.

In the light of this, I would strongly urge you to find some mechanism by which these children can attend their chosen school – chosen as it best meets their multiple birth needs and will give them the best start in school life.

Yours faithfully



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
keithreed@tamba.org.uk

To the Chair of the Appeals Panel

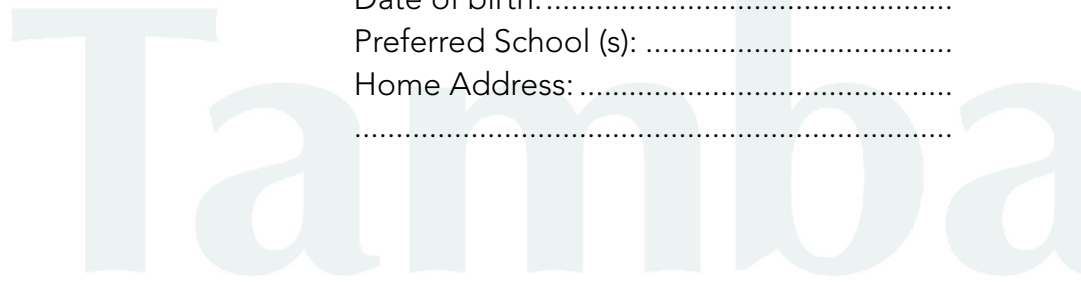
Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....  
Date of birth: .....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....



**Dear Chair**

**Re: Appeal for places in a small school**

I am writing in support of the above appeal. As the Chief Executive of the Twins and Multiple Births Association I bring years of experience of the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families, to this case. Our organisation has worked with families for over 30 years and provides expert advice in the field to families, professionals and both local and central government.

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced. The 'close coupling' of their relationship can further add to difficulties in the children developing their own individuality and these combined factors require very careful consideration when choosing the correct educational setting.

Many multiple birth children experience difficulties in developing social skills and in communicating clearly with others. This can cause them to be nervous in challenging situations. The less overwhelming setting of a small school is one in which such children are likely to gain in confidence and make friendships outside the multiple birth 'group'. This is essential if they are to develop properly and overcome the disadvantages many multiple birth children face.

I realise that in placing multiple birth children it can be difficult to make a place allocation that will provide for more than one child with such specific needs. However, over the years Tamba has sought to promote best practice in the light of national and international research findings. Each multiple birth family is different and must be dealt with according to individual need. The needs of this family are unusual and specific. All the evidence of recent research would support the route they wish to take.

In the light of this, I would strongly urge you to find some mechanism by which these children can attend their chosen school – chosen as it best meets their multiple birth needs and will give them the best start in school life.

Yours sincerely

Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
keithreed@tamba.org.uk

To the Headteacher

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....

Date of birth:.....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

Contact no.....

**Dear headteacher,****Re: Congratulations you have twins - starting at your School**

As you may be aware, you have twins due to start at your school for the forthcoming year and I wanted to offer my congratulations and provide some background information on their unique needs. This background document is entitled School Policy for Twins and Higher Multiples and is intended to provide helpful advice which meets these needs. We have also recently produced a new report into the educational needs of our families and this can be downloaded from the research section of our website at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk). There are additional resources for teaching professionals at [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

You will be able to see that one of the most significant areas of concern for families is how their children are placed either in the same class or in different classes, where this is possible, or how educators are able to cater for their individual needs when only one class is available.

Tamba believes all multiple birth children are unique and their needs should be considered by schools in discussion with their parents. Therefore, it is of some concern to Tamba that many schools enact a blanket policy of either separating multiples across different classes or keeping multiples together in the same class without parental input into the decision. The consequences of not involving parents in this decision can be damaging for the children involved. Therefore, we trust that you will ensure that they are properly consulted on their children's needs before any decision of their class or group placement is made.

While there is no legislation governing this matter, the Government confirmed in a debate in Parliament (Hansard reference: 6 Jan 2010 : Column 140WH) that they expect parents of twins, triplets or more to be consulted on this decision.

The Minister for Schools and Learners (Mr. Vernon Coaker) said, "I would like to address the hon. Gentleman's important point about respecting parents' wishes on what class their children should be placed in. Wherever possible, schools should take into account parents'

wishes about where children should be placed, and certainly the expectation is that good practice would demand that the school consults the parents on the placement of their children. I do not know whether every parent of every twin would want their children placed in the same class, but certainly the important point the hon. Gentleman made was about consultation with parents, which is absolutely right and would be good practice in most schools."

He added, "I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the rights of the parents and the expression of their wishes should be paramount. In the vast majority of cases where schools have consulted with parents who wish their children to be together, they have been placed together, and I am saying that that would be my hope and expectation. The issue for us is that framing that in legislation is difficult. However, reading into the record the fact that that is our expectation and certainly an example of good practice, which one would expect a good school to follow, means that schools will be expected to consult with parents about what they think is appropriate for their children. That would be expected to happen as a matter of course on a range of issues, and clearly it should also happen for an issue as important as which class their sons or daughters are in."

This letter is meant to be helpful so please feel free to contact me if we can assist you in addressing the needs of multiple birth children.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed

Chief Executive

[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)

To the Headteacher

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....

Date of birth:.....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

Contact no.....

Dear headteacher,

**Re: Congratulations you have triplets - starting at your School**

As you may be aware, you have triplets due to start at your school for the forthcoming year and I wanted to offer my congratulations and provide some background information on their unique needs. This background document is entitled School Policy for Twins and Higher Multiples and is intended to provide helpful advice which meets these needs. We have also recently produced a new report into the educational needs of our families and this can be downloaded from the research section of our website at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk). There are additional resources for teaching professionals at [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

You will be able to see that one of the most significant areas of concern for families is how their children are placed either in the same class or in different classes, where this is possible, or how educators are able to cater for their individual needs when only one class is available.

Tamba believes all multiple birth children are unique and their needs should be considered by schools in discussion with their parents. Therefore, it is of some concern to Tamba that many schools enact a blanket policy of either separating multiples across different classes or keeping multiples together in the same class without parental input into the decision. The consequences of not involving parents in this decision can be damaging for the children involved.

While there is no legislation governing this matter, the Government confirmed in a debate in Parliament (Hansard reference: 6 Jan 2010 : Column 140WH) that they expect parents of twins, triplets or more to be consulted on this decision. Schools with blanket policies should now revise them.

The Minister for Schools and Learners (Mr. Vernon Coaker) said, "I would like to address the hon. Gentleman's important point about respecting parents' wishes on what class their children should be placed in. Wherever possible, schools should take into account parents'

wishes about where children should be placed, and certainly the expectation is that good practice would demand that the school consults the parents on the placement of their children. I do not know whether every parent of every twin would want their children placed in the same class, but certainly the important point the hon. Gentleman made was about consultation with parents, which is absolutely right and would be good practice in most schools."

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This letter is meant to be helpful and we would be more than happy to assist in helping you address the needs of multiple birth children so please do contact me if we can help in anyway.

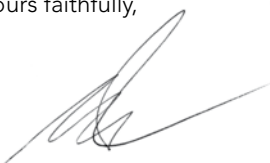
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You will be able to see that one of the most significant areas of concern for families is how their children are placed either in the same class or in different classes, where this is possible, or how educators are able to cater for their individual needs when only one class is available.

Tamba believes all multiple birth children are unique and their needs should be considered by schools in discussion with their parents. Therefore, it is of some concern to Tamba that many schools enact a blanket policy of either separating multiples across different classes or keeping multiples together in the same class without parental input into the decision. The consequences of not involving parents in this decision can be damaging for the children involved. Therefore, we trust that you will ensure that they are properly consulted on their children's needs before any decision of their class or group placement is made.

This letter is meant to be helpful so please feel free to contact me if we can assist you in addressing the needs of multiple birth children.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)

**Tamba**, 2 The Willows, Gardner Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4PG  
Tel: 01483 304442 • Fax: 01483 302483  
[www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk)

**Tamba**  
TWINS & MULTIPLE BIRTHS ASSOCIATION



**To the form teacher**

Child/ren's name(s) .....

.....

Date of birth: .....

Preferred School (s): .....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Dear teacher,****Re: Congratulations you have twins starting in your class**

As you may be aware, you have twins due to start in your class in the forthcoming year and I wanted to offer my congratulations and provide some background information on their unique needs. The enclosed is background document is entitled School Policy for Twins and Higher Multiples and is intended to provide helpful advice which meets these needs. We have also recently produced a new report into the educational needs of our families and this can be downloaded at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk). There are additional resources for teaching professionals at [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced. The 'close coupling' of their relationship can further add to difficulties in the children developing their own individuality and these combined factors require very careful consideration.

From the start the children should be addressed by their names, avoiding 'group' names like 'twins' or 'twinies'. It is important to help them build their individuality. Placing them in separate groups and encouraging them to engage in different activities are good ways of effecting this. Where possible they should wear different colours so that they are easily identified by ancillary staff. At parents evenings it is particularly helpful if their school work is discussed with their parents in different sessions. This makes it easier to focus on them as individuals and helps avoid comparison.

Twins (and other multiple birth children) should be encouraged to speak for themselves – you should discourage one speaking for the other – and their relationship with each other should be monitored along with their educational progress. It may be that at some point it would be good for them to be in different classes, especially once they have fully settled at school. Such arrangements should be reviewed at regular intervals and no decision should be made without including parents and maybe the children themselves in the discussion.

As you can tell this is just a brief overview and more information regarding good practice in school is available at our website. We would be more than happy to assist in helping you address the needs of multiple birth children so please do contact me if we can help in anyway.

At parents evenings it is particularly helpful if their school work is discussed with their parents in different sessions. This makes it easier to focus on them as individuals and helps avoid comparison.

Over the years Tamba has put together a range of material regarding good practice in school and this is available both in leaflet form and on our website [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk).

We would be more than happy to assist in helping you address the needs of multiple birth children so please do contact me if we can help in anyway.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed

Chief Executive

[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)

To the form teacher

Childs name .....

.....  
Date of birth:.....

Home Address: .....

.....

**Dear teacher,**

**Re: Congratulations you have a twin starting in your class**

As you may be aware, you have a twin due to start in your class in the forthcoming year and I wanted to offer my congratulations and provide some background information on their unique needs. The enclosed background document is entitled School Policy for Twins and Higher Multiples and is intended to provide helpful advice which meets these needs. We have also recently produced a new report into the educational needs of our families and this can be downloaded at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk). There are additional resources for teaching professionals at [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

Research has found multiple birth children's academic achievement below those of their peers when starting school. There are a range of factors contributing to these delays, which include biological differences (particularly in underweight premature babies who are also at greater risk of developing ADHD or ADD). The unique triangular relationship they share with their principal carer during their early years can also make any existing speech and language delays more pronounced. The 'close coupling' of their relationship can further add to difficulties in the children developing their own individuality and these combined factors require very careful consideration.

From the start the children should be addressed by their names, avoiding 'group' names like 'twins' or 'tinnies'. It is important to help them build their individuality. Like all children starting school is a major milestone and some multiples settle better than others. Nevertheless twins, especially during the early years, often need to check on their sibling during the school day especially if one is unwell or upset and I would strongly urge you to consider how this might be achieved outside of break times. I realise this could be disrupted but research does suggest it could have a significant impact on these children. Their sibling is called..... and is in.....class. I have sent the same letter to them to.

This letter is meant to be helpful so please feel free to contact me if we can assist you in addressing the needs of multiple birth children.

Yours faithfully



Keith Reed

Chief Executive

[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)

To the form teacher

Child/ren's name(s) .....

Date of birth: .....

Home Address: .....

**Dear teacher,****Re: Congratulations you have triplets starting in your class**

As you may be aware, you have triplets due to start in your class in the forthcoming year and I wanted to offer my congratulations and provide some background information on their unique needs. The enclosed background document is entitled School Policy for Twins and Higher Multiples and is intended to provide helpful advice which meets these needs. We have also recently produced a new report into the educational needs of our families and this can be downloaded at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk). There are additional resources for teaching professionals at [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

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From the start the children should be addressed by their names, avoiding 'group' names like 'triplets'. It is important to help them build their individuality. Placing them in separate groups and encouraging them to engage in different activities are good ways of effecting this. Where possible they should wear different colours so that they are easily identified by ancillary staff. At parents evenings it is particularly helpful if their school work is discussed with their parents in different sessions. This makes it easier to focus on them as individuals and helps avoid comparison.

All multiple birth children should be encouraged to speak for themselves – you should discourage one speaking for the other – and their relationship with each other should be monitored along with their educational progress. It may be that at some point it would be good for them to be in different classes, especially once they have fully settled at school. Such arrangements should be reviewed at regular intervals and no decision should be made without including parents and maybe the children themselves in the discussion.

This letter is meant to be helpful so please feel free to contact me if we can assist you in addressing the needs of multiple birth children.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Reed

Chief Executive

[keithreed@tamba.org.uk](mailto:keithreed@tamba.org.uk)

To the form teacher

Childs name .....  
.....  
Date of birth:.....  
Home Address: .....  
.....



**Dear teacher,**

**Re: Congratulations you have a triplet starting in your class**

As you may be aware, you have a triplet due to start in your class in the forthcoming year and I wanted to offer my congratulations and provide some background information on their unique needs. The enclosed background document is entitled School Policy for Twins and Higher Multiples and is intended to provide helpful advice which meets these needs. We have also recently produced a new report into the educational needs of our families and this can be downloaded at [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk). There are additional resources for teaching professionals at [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

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This letter is meant to be helpful so please feel free to contact me if we can assist you in addressing the needs of multiple birth children.

Yours faithfully

Keith Reed  
Chief Executive  
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# BACKGROUND BRIEFING FOR TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS: SCHOOL POLICY FOR TWINS AND HIGHER MULTIPLES

## PROFESSOR PAT PREEDY

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been a significant increase in the number of twins and higher multiples so that in many countries including the UK one child in thirty-three is now a multiple. It is therefore not unusual for schools to have several sets of twins and even triplets or more.

This increase in multiples may result for some of these reasons: mothers delaying having their families (older women tend to release more than one egg), improved neo-natal care (multiples are frequently born prematurely), and fertility treatments.

Firstly, being a multiple is NOT a disability. The following are some of the advantages of being a multiple:

- a unique and special relationship that is not available to singletons;
- an understanding about sharing and waiting for adult attention right from the start;
- having a companion and friend available particularly when tackling homework and revision for exams;
- having a competitor who can spur his or her sibling (s) to do better.

Twins and higher multiples are not like brothers and sisters born closely together. This policy is designed to help educators understand multiples and to be able to meet their additional needs.

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND ZYGOSITY

Multiples are formed when two or more eggs are fertilised (di-zygotic) or when an embryo splits (monozygotic).

Knowing whether you are identical or not, is frequently very important to parents and to the children themselves as it is an important aspect of their identity. Also some diseases are hereditary – therefore if one identical twin has a disease it is highly likely that the other one will also have the disease.

There is a much higher risk of damage (complications)

to multiple birth babies as a result of problems before and/or during birth. Compared with singletons, the risk of perinatal death in twins is several times greater as is that of cerebral palsy. There are also greater risks of prematurity and intrauterine growth retardation leading to the babies being small (low birth weight or abbreviated development) for gestational age and physical damage. On average, twins are born four weeks before singletons and one kilo (2.2 lbs) lighter, with correspondingly more serious issues for higher multiples.

## MONOZYGOTIC/MZ TWINS (IDENTICAL)

Monozygotic twins are formed when the embryo splits. The babies are of the same sex and have the same genetic make-up. The later the embryo splits, the more danger there is of physical damage to one or both of the babies.

Early division results in two sacs and two placentas frequently leading to misdiagnosis of these twins as non-identical because of the old myth that “two placentas means non-identical”. Later division of the embryo leads to a shared sac and placenta. Very late division of the embryo, results in conjoined or “Siamese” twins.

Sometimes the shared blood supply of identical twins leads to the twin-twin transfusion syndrome where one receives most of the nutrition and is engorged whilst the other is pale and sometimes 500g or more smaller. Twin-twin transfusion syndrome can mean that identical twins seem less alike than non-identical twins.

Although monozygotic twins are often described as “identical”, differences in biology and environment means that there can be considerable differences between them including their fingerprints and footprints.

## DI-ZYGOTIC/DZ TWINS (NON-IDENTICAL)

Dizygotic twins are produced when two individual eggs are fertilised by two different sperm. These twins are no more alike than brothers or sisters. They may be same sex boy twins, same sex girl twins or boy/girl twins.

The placentas of DZ twins may fuse together with the result that many have been incorrectly diagnosed as MZ (identical) twins. Unlike MZ twins, the release and fertilization of two eggs can vary with maternal age, with assisted reproduction and with ethnicity, DZ twins being more common in mothers of African ancestry and less common in ones from Asia.

Higher Multiples (33 weeks gestation is normal for triplets)

Triplets and higher multiples may result when individual eggs are fertilised by individual sperm, as in the case of DZ twins, or when the embryo splits as in the case of MZ twins. The risk of physical disability is greatly increased with the number of babies present

## INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

On average, multiple birth children score lower than singletons on IQ tests and tests of language ability. Modest differences between multiple birth children and singletons in mathematics and early reading have also been found in The Performance Indicators In Primary Schools (PIPS) tests, devised by Professor Peter Tymms from the University of Durham in the UK.

These lower scores have been attributed to the unique environment of multiple birth children where they receive fewer individual interactions and re-enforce each others' immature speech. At the extreme, this 'special twin language' is referred to as cryptophasia or idiologlossia.

Each child needs to be assessed as an individual so that if required an individual education plan can be devised and learning support provided which may include the services of a speech and language therapist. If both children have special needs the support should not be halved as though they were one.

Research by Professor David Hay indicates that there may be a greater tendency for multiple birth children (especially boys) to have higher incidences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Such children may be impulsive and have difficulty concentrating and staying on task.

Care must be taken when assessing the behaviour of young children as they are naturally lively and curious and assessments need to take into consideration child development and learning through play. Routines, clear rules and self-organisation strategies such as "plan, do and review" often help children to focus on the learning required. Children may also find it helpful to picture a dial to control their behaviour. For example, ten may be very active, 5 may be just right for learning, one may be just right for sleep. Adjusting the dial helps the child to

adapt his/her own behaviour to the particular context – the football field is different from the library!

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Multiple birth children do not develop personally, socially and emotionally in the same way as singletons. There is always their co-multiple(s) present for direct comparison and competition. Although siblings are compared, and rival each other trying to establish dominance, the relationship is frequently more intense for multiples.

## COMPARISON

It is part of human nature to make comparisons and although siblings may be compared by parents, friends, teachers and others, for multiple birth children direct comparisons can be made from birth without the "excuse" that one of the children is considerably younger or older. Interactions with parents and within families regarding competition and comparisons often establish patterns that later on may be problematic.

If one multiple birth child is always compared to the detriment of the other, he or she may lose self-esteem and opt out. The children themselves may become over concerned with comparing themselves, looking for differences to indicate that one is better than the other.

Both adults and children need to consider the positive aspects of each child. This may be difficult if one child always seems to achieve more. If one receives an award and the other doesn't, it can be hard to reward one whilst consoling the other. However, if the children are placed in context with their peers, a bigger picture may help to understand that comparison is not just with one's co-multiple(s).

Teachers need to emphasise the uniqueness of each child. When speaking about a twin or higher multiple to other staff or to parents, this child needs to be discussed relative to the peer group and not just to the other multiple(s) siblings. Parent/Teacher consultations need to be arranged so that each child is discussed separately. The time allocated for each multiple needs to be the same as for singletons in the peer group. Consideration may also have to be given as to how the children operate as multiples e.g. they may be highly competitive at home.

## COMPETITION AND RIVALRY

For multiple birth children rivalry may be more intense than with singletons. The children may become highly competitive; having a heightened sense of what is fair, frequently demanding exactly the same. Even if multiple

birth children are in the same class at school, they can not always be treated the same. Teachers may not always fully understand if one twin becomes upset if they perceive the other to be having a better deal. If one comes “first” and the other “second” in the class or school, then one is inevitably considered less able by the others. Multiples may need help to understand that life is not fair and that they can not always be treated in the same way or have the same. Teachers and parents can help by praising each child for their achievements and helping multiple birth children to be pleased when their co-multiple has success.

### DOMINANCE

Dominance may take the following forms:

- neither child dominates;
- one always dominates;
- the children alternate dominance;
- dominance varies according to the situation or activity.

Although one child may dominate in the home situation, this may not be the case particularly when the children start school. Observation of the children, particularly in a play situation, may help to determine which child, if any, is dominant, the nature of the dominance and whether this appears to be adversely affecting their learning. Where one child is always dominant, even speaking for the other, the dependent child may find it difficult to function effectively in school. However, when separated it may be the dominant child who loses

confidence and the dependent child who blossoms and gains in confidence. If one child is always dominant, try arranging play sessions with children where the children do not have their co-multiple(s) present. Playing with younger children may help the dependent child to assume a leadership role. Playing with older children may help the dominant child to take orders.

### INDIVIDUALITY AND SELF IMAGE

Central to personal, social and emotional development is an awareness and understanding of self, with the development of a positive self- image. By school age children place themselves in categories such as age, size and gender, referring to qualities and characteristics as well as to appearance. However, for multiple birth children, there is the additional category of “twin”, “triplet” or more. Their concept of self and their development as an individual, is inextricably linked with how far they and others perceive them to be a unit. Some multiple birth children are so dependent on each other that they are unable to function as individuals. The nature of the multiple birth relationship may be so close that the death of a multiple is particularly painful for the surviving twin.

The relationship between multiple birth children varies from those who seem distinct, independent individuals to those who only seem to be able to function as a couple or unit. We describe the following three main multiple “types”:  
The model may be used to assess how multiple birth children operate as multiples and as individuals. In the

<b>“EXTREME INDIVIDUALS”</b>	<b>“MATURE DEPENDENTS”</b>	<b>“CLOSELY COUPLED”</b>
<p>Multiple birth children who find their relationship with each other restrictive to such a degree that they may fight, deny their multiple birth relationship sometimes polarizing to opposite extremes in order to establish their own identities.</p>	<p>These are multiple birth children who enjoy their relationship with each other functioning effectively both as multiples and as individuals.</p> <p>They are able to pursue their own interests and friendships without resenting or over-competing with their co-multiple(s).</p> <p>If they happen to have the same interest or talents as their co-multiple(s) they still pursue that course aware that being an individual sometimes means doing the same as your co-multiple(s).</p>	<p>Multiple birth children who act as though they are a couple or unit and are mostly treated by other people as one unit. The children may respond to both names interchangeably and be unable to recognise their own mirror image. They have few or no friends outside of their twinship and may combine to be a powerful unit.</p>

following assessment sheet, the characteristics displayed by each child are recorded by ticking the box next to each descriptor. A box is ticked on the horizontal line every time an indicator is identified. Ticking the horizontal line enables the complexities of the multiple birth relationship to begin to appear.

Children may fall broadly into one of the three types or they may swing from being intense individuals to being closely coupled or they may display characteristics of all three. The children within the multiple sets may vary, for example, one child may be "Closely Coupled" whilst the other is a "Mature Dependent".

Life experiences and comparison underpin the model as these constantly apply.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIPLE BIRTH CHILDREN ©

### CLOSELY COUPLED EXTREME INDIVIDUAL MATURE DEPENDENT SEPARATION IN SCHOOL

Putting multiple birth children into separate classes requires careful consideration and consultation with

parents. Most multiple birth children have little experience of separation prior to starting school and may be upset if they have to cope with a dual separation from parents and their co-multiple(s).

Many schools have policies (written and unwritten) declaring that multiples should be separated in order to help them to develop as individuals or should be kept together as multiples are a natural unit. Some schools have rigid organisational policies that fail to take into account the needs of multiples e.g. classes are arranged in alphabetical order or birthdate so multiples have to be kept together. There is no right or wrong answer with regard to separation in school; each decision should be related to the needs and type of relationship the siblings share / experience.

Before deciding whether to separate multiple birth children, parents and professionals should meet to discuss the pre-school development and experiences of the children. The questionnaire in the Preschool section of the education website ([www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)) provides a useful framework for assessing the children both as individuals and as multiples, prompting discussion about how best to support the learning of the children.

The needs of each child must be considered both as an individual and as a multiple. No decision should be irreversible – flexibility is the key word both for parents and teachers.

EXTREME INDIVIDUAL	NAME	NAME	MATURE DEPENDENT	NAME	NAME	CLOSELY COUPLED	NAME	NAME
Plays mostly alone			shared and separate friends			unhappy when separated – want to be together most/all of the time		
Likes own friends – doesn't share friends			happy separated and happy together			respond to each others' names/ group name e.g. Twinnie		
opts out if twin successful			supportive of co-multiple(s)			can not recognise mirror image		
polarises – goes to extremes (angel/ devil)			has developed as an individual with own identity			uses twin "language" (cryptophasia)		
excessively competitive			Can choose same or different from co-multiple(s)			slows down/speeds up to keep together especially in school		
dislikes co-multiple(s)						few or no individual friends		
refuses to dress alike						combines to form a unit		
tries to dominate						dress and behave identically		



## REASONS TO KEEP MULTIPLES TOGETHER IN SCHOOL

- Only one classroom is available.
- Multiple birth children may need the support of each other particularly if they have not experienced separation prior to school or are experiencing a major upheaval such as death, divorce, new sibling etc. Even if the children are comfortable when separated, they may need to be able to check up on what the other is doing
- Very different teaching styles by teachers in the same year group. Even if the teaching styles are similar the children may be compared more at home particularly if one appears to be making more progress e.g. gets a reading book first.
- The multiples do NOT want to be separated. Forced separation in the first year of school along with all the other firsts can actually reinforce dependence on each other. Opportunities to work independently in the same classroom may be a much better option.
- The siblings have shown no problems in previous pre-school settings where they shared a classroom and had a positive and productive school experience with peers.

## REASONS TO SEPARATE MULTIPLES IN SCHOOL

- The multiples want to be separated.
- One child is markedly more able academically and or socially than the other.
- One is a constant distraction to the other.
- One child perceives himself or herself as failing.
- One 'mothers' or over protects the other (more often with boy/girl pairs).
- There is markedly similar progress with one child leveling up or down so that they can keep together.
- There is disruptive behaviour where multiples form a "fatal combination"; the multiples use their identity to cheat or play tricks.
- One or both children are dependent: unable to mix or relate with other children; their constant 'togetherness' is hindering the development of their social skills.
- There is intense competitiveness so that the child's main goal is to keep up with or beat their co-multiple(s).
- One or both children polarise (go to opposite extremes).
- There is lack of privacy where one multiple birth

child constantly reports to parents about the activities and progress of the other.

- A division of labour exists that interferes with their learning and socialization.

The placement of multiples should be reviewed annually. Parents and teachers need to discuss how they will support the children before reversing a decision too quickly. The outcome may not be what is expected e.g. when a twin pair is separated because one child is very dominant. In such a case, the dominant child often loses confidence as s/he has lost her main purpose whilst the other child flourishes.

## STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS OF MULTIPLES

- Encourage multiples to sit apart for different class activities. This assists in identifying who's who and discourages them from completing each other's work or over-relying on each other.
- Look for differences in the multiples, not sameness, e.g. voice differences, left/right handed, birthmarks, hair growth. Being able to address each multiple by his or her individual name, assists teachers, peers and friends in recognising that they are individuals.
- Refer to each child by his or her own name. This helps to identify each child, develops individuality and sets a good example for their peers to also address them individually.
- Expect differences in test scores, neatness, behaviour but don't be surprised if they are very similar especially if the children are identical; if one is markedly behind the other investigate the reasons (don't rule out a learning disability in one of the multiples).
- Avoid insensitive comparisons, e.g. "You are smarter than your twin." This sets up both multiples to have poor self-esteem. Instead, get to know each child's preferences, interests, or hobbies. This may be as simple as knowing each child's favourite colours, types of books, games, or subjects...etc.

## FLEXIBLE SCHOOL POLICY ✓

Considering the needs of multiple birth children is an important part of ensuring that 'Every Child Matters'. The successful school ensures that it also sits at the centre of the model:

Although some smaller schools do not have the option of separating multiple birth children into separate

classes, they are still able to meet the needs of multiples if they set out to do so. Children may be given opportunities to develop independence in separate groups and a positive staff attitude will ensure that the children are called by name and encouraged to develop both as multiples and as individuals.

Rather than simply considering whether schools have enough classes for separation, parents are advised to visit prospective schools in order to consider whether the school staff have experience of and understand the needs of multiple birth children and are prepared to be flexible in order to meet their needs. A school with more than one class in each year group may be less able to meet the needs of multiples than a school with single form entry that does understand the needs of multiples.

## NURSERY AND SCHOOL ADMISSION

When entering nursery/kindergarden or school, multiple birth children may need special consideration. They should not be labeled as taking up more than one place. They may particularly need a pre-school place as they may have had little or no opportunity to socialise with other children, and to make friends on an individual basis.

Recent legislation in the UK acknowledges that multiple birth children should have special consideration with regard to school admissions:

“Families must be at the heart of the admissions system and the Government expects the admission authorities for primary schools

### EXTREME INDIVIDUALISING SCHOOLS

Multiple birth children are always separated as it is believed that this will help the children to develop as individuals.

Schools may not:

- acknowledge the multiple relationship and the possible need for the children to be near each other or to be able to check out what the other is doing;
- take into account that one child may be affected by the other e.g. by being extremely competitive or by opting out;
- support the children personally, socially and emotionally in order to develop as individuals.

### FLEXIBLE SCHOOLS ✓

The school is aware of the potential needs of multiple birth children and their families.

- Parents and children’s views with regard to separation are taken into consideration.
- The children are assessed to consider whether separation is appropriate when they start school.
- Arrangements can be changed according to the needs of the children.
- The multiple birth relationship is acknowledged and celebrated as well as enabling children to develop as individuals.
- The children are recognised and called by name.
- Individual achievements are recognised and celebrated.
- Parental consultations are arranged for each child. Each child is compared against the peer group or against typical developmental benchmarks.
- The children are comfortable selecting the same or similar subjects/activities understanding that being an individual may mean doing the same

### CLOSELY COUPLING SCHOOLS

Multiple birth children are always kept together as it is believed that they are a natural unit.

Schools may not:

- recognise individuals;
- call individuals by name;
- assess the children separately;
- report on their progress separately;
- recognise individual problems and issues;
- provide for multiple birth children as individuals e.g. when one has a special need.

to take the needs of parents with young children into account in deciding which oversubscription criteria will be used. The admission authorities for primary schools should ensure in their oversubscription criteria that siblings (including twins, triplets or children from other multiple births) can attend the same primary school, as long as they comply with the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998."

## DELAYED SCHOOL ENTRY

Many multiple birth children are born prematurely. Even when there are no actual disabilities resulting from prematurity and low birth weight, the real date of birth may be extremely important. Premature children may be forced into the school year above their "correct" year if they are born two or three months early, as can happen with multiples. This may result in the children being assessed as behind their peers, when in reality they are being compared with an older age group. When assessing premature children, it may be helpful to compare them with

the year group below, to see if their development and performance is more in line with this year group. Parents and educators may consider applying for delayed school entry, or for additional time in the early years setting in order to allow such children further time to develop.

A more difficult situation arises if one multiple is significantly delayed compared with the peer group. The question arises, "Should the other(s) start school or be advanced whilst one stays behind?" Professional assessment is required in order to decide upon appropriate intervention, which may or may not include delaying school entry.

Tamba strongly advocates that multiple birth children should not be separated as a result of admissions policies and should be given priority for admission.

With understanding and support where necessary, multiple birth children can make good progress in school, developing as individuals whilst enjoying and celebrating their multiple and other relationships.

For more information please look at the 'Meeting the Educational Needs of Multiple Birth Children' on our website: [http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/school\\_years/mte.htm](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org/school_years/mte.htm)



# "TOGETHER OR APART"

## A CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS OF MULTIPLES

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**This checklist and questionnaire provides a framework for parents and teachers when discussing separation of multiple birth children in school.**

**There is no simple recipe to decide if multiples should be separated in school. With regard to higher multiples we need to ask, "Who, if any, should be separated from the others?"**

**Rather than simply focusing on whether or not to separate, discussion between parents and teachers should cover:**

- How dependent/independent the children are;
- Social skills and dependence upon adults;
- Previous experience of being apart;
- Language and abilities relative to each other and to their peer group;
- Behaviour at preschool or at school;
- Does one dominate e.g. when reading or telling about events, do they take turns to dominate or none of the children dominate?
- In social situations, does one always hang back?
- Interests at home, at sport and at school;
- Needs for intervention (speech and language therapy, physiotherapy etc.);
  - Same or different friends;
  - Zygosity and sex;. Ggenerally girls are closer than boys and MZ are closer than DZ , but there are so many exceptions to any rule!
- Physical development-are they much smaller (or larger) than most of the other children?
  - Age of the multiples-is it time for them to try a new experience?
  - Feelings of teachers and parents;
  - Views of any other professional seeing the multiples;
  - Wishes of the children: especially where these differ from each other or from those of the adults.



## THE CLOSENESS OF THE MULTIPLE BOND. IS IT DIFFERENT AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL?

When parents and teachers talk about what is best for multiples, it may sometimes seem as though they are speaking about different children. Any child may behave

quite differently at home than at school. The following questions deal with behaviours which are often situation-specific and if answered separately by parents and teachers can give some idea of what may be different between the home and school situation.

**The checklist may be used by parents and nursery staff when considering placement at the start of school or at any stage when during the school year.**

### 1. Have you found if one multiple is ill or upset, the other(s) are affected also?

	usually	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

### 2. If one multiple is reprimanded do you find the other(s) react(s) or are affected also?

	usually	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

### 3a. Do the multiples combine forces to be helpful?

	often	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

### 3b. Do the multiples combine to be creative?

	often	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

### 3c. Do the multiples combine to be disruptive?

	often	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				



**4. Does one multiple check what the other(s) are getting or doing? (Answer for each child)**

<b>CHILD A</b>	<b>often</b>	<b>occasionally</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

<b>CHILD B</b>	<b>often</b>	<b>occasionally</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

<b>CHILD C</b>	<b>often</b>	<b>occasionally</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

<b>CHILD D</b>	<b>often</b>	<b>occasionally</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

(apologies to parents of quintuplets or more!)

**5a. Do the multiples compare themselves in sports activities?**

	<b>usually</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

**5b. Do the multiples compare themselves in appearance?**

	<b>often</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

**5c. Do the multiples compare themselves in academic performance?**

	<b>often</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>seldom</b>	<b>never</b>
Parents				
Teachers				

**5d. Do the multiples compare themselves in popularity and peer approval?**

	often	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

**5e. Do the multiples compare themselves in adult approval?**

	often	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

**6. Which of the following characterises competition among the multiples**

	Parents	Teachers
They compete constantly with each other		
They co-operate and have pride in each other		
Their competitiveness is healthy		
They compete for adult approval		
They are jealous and never praise each other		

**7. If one child is obviously more talented in a particular area, the other(s) will opt out**

	usually	sometimes	seldom	never
Parents				
Teachers				

**8. Do you believe the children show a tendency to go to opposite extremes in behaviour, personality, interests (e.g. quiet/noisy; indoor/outdoor; outgoing/shy; placid aggressive)**

	yes	no
Parents		
Teachers		

**9. At present which multiple do you think needs extra help at school in:**

<b>Parent Response</b>	<b>Child A</b>	<b>Child B</b>	<b>Child C</b>	<b>Child D</b>
Speech and Language				
Writing				
Reading				
Number skills				
Fine Motor Skills				
Gross Motor Skills				

<b>Teacher Response</b>	<b>Child A</b>	<b>Child B</b>	<b>Child C</b>	<b>Child D</b>
Speech and Language				
Writing				
Reading				
Number skills				
Fine Motor Skills				
Gross Motor Skills				

**10. At present what do you think each multiple would prefer?**

<b>Parent Response</b>	<b>Child A</b>	<b>Child B</b>	<b>Child C</b>	<b>Child D</b>
To be in the same class				
To be in separate classes				
To be in separate schools				
The children don't mind				
Haven't asked them				

<b>Teacher Response</b>	<b>Child A</b>	<b>Child B</b>	<b>Child C</b>	<b>Child D</b>
To be in the same class				
To be in separate classes				
To be in separate schools				
The children don't mind				
Haven't asked them				

Some multiples are so close that they seem like a couple or unit. Others may fail to treat them as individuals so that they may even respond to both names interchangeably. Separation is not necessarily linked to the development of individuality. Children are actually in school for a short time and most of their development is in the home. It is important to help multiples develop as individuals by:

- Referring to them by name
- Helping them to develop their own friends and interests
- Arranging for them to have time away from their brothers and sisters
- Making eye-contact with each child
- Speaking to them as individuals and encouraging them to respond in complex sentences
- Rewarding them for their individual achievements
- Comparing them with the peer group not with their co-multiples

Having completed the checklist consider the reasons for separating the children or keeping them together in school. whether the multiples should be separated in school or kept together in the same class.

Reasons For Separation	Reasons For Keeping Together

Final decision made in partnership with parents and teachers.

We have decided to .....

because .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Any further action e.g. assessment; involvement of outside agencies.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date of review: .....

Signed (PARENTS) .....

Signed (SCHOOL) .....

Date .....

	<b>Special Considerations</b>
<b>Child A</b>	
<b>Child B</b>	
<b>Child C</b>	
<b>Child D</b>	

**KEY QUESTIONS**

1. Are the children premature and possibly in the wrong year group?
2. Is further assessment required?
3. Should outside agencies be involved e.g. speech and language therapist?
4. When will the decision be reviewed?
5. Can arrangements be changed in the future?